

Remarks

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-43 are pending in the application. Claims 1-5, 8-14, 17-20, 23-26, 29-32 and 35 were rejected. Claims 6, 7, 15, 16, 21, 22, 27, 28, 33 and 34 were objected to. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 36-43 have been added.

II. Claim Objections

Claims 6, 7, 15, 16, 21, 22, 27, 28, 33 and 34 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claims containing limitations found in the allowable claims have been added as set forth below:

New claims 36-38 are derived from allowable claims 6 and 7. New independent claim 36 requires "assigning a priority to at least one of the telephone numbers in the record." New claims 37 and 38 correspond to allowable claims 6 and 7, respectively.

New independent claim 39 is derived from allowable claim 16, and requires "allowing the caller to re-arrange the order of the communications to manipulate the call pattern."

New independent claim 40 is a system claim having limitations similar to new claim 39.

New claims 41-43 contain additional limitations not found in the allowable claims, and are discussed more fully below.

III. Claims Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5, 8-14, 17-20, 23-26, 29-32, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0029567 (Timmins).

Applicants have amended claim 1 and respectfully traverse the rejection.

In an example of an embodiment of the invention, a technique is provided for providing enhanced information assistance services to a caller. A request is received from a caller for a list of suggested goods/services providers satisfying one or more specified criteria. For example, a caller may request a list of shoe stores in the caller's geographic area. The operator searches one or more databases and generates a list containing multiple listings, each representing a party that the caller may wish to contact. In this example, the operator generates a list of shoe stores comprising their names and telephones numbers. The list is referred to as a "personal dialing queue." A first telephone number from the list is automatically selected, and the caller's call is connected to the first telephone number. At this point, the information assistance service does not disconnect, but monitors the call to the first telephone number. If a predetermined call status condition (call disconnection by a called party, for example) is detected, a second telephone number from the list is automatically selected, and the caller's call is then connected to the second telephone number. This process may be repeated until the list of telephone numbers in the list is exhausted.

Timmins discloses a system for providing services over a communications network including private directory and calendar data synchronization, identity pre-validation, etc.

[Abstract] A user may create, maintain or access one or more contacts folders containing the names and contact numbers of friends, business associates, etc. [0081] At the caller's request, an operator may retrieve the contact number of a person specified in a contacts folder and connect the caller thereto. [0101, 0104]

Amended Independent Claim 1

Amended independent claim 1 defines a technique for providing an information service. Amended claim 1 requires "receiving a call from a caller, the call including an information

assistance request,” “conducting a data search in response to the information assistance request,” and “generating a record which contains a plurality of telephone numbers resulting from the data search, the telephone numbers being associated with a plurality of independent entities, respectively.” Amended claim 1 further comprises repeatedly selecting a number from the record and connecting the caller’s call to the selected number. A new number is selected from the dialing queue when a predetermined call status condition is detected.

Nowhere does Timmins teach or suggest “generating a record which contains a plurality of telephone numbers resulting from the data search, the telephone numbers being associated with a plurality of independent entities, respectively,” as amended claim 1 now requires. The Examiner appears to have read claim 1 onto Timmins’ disclosure (in [0101]) that an operator may search within a user’s contacts folder for the various telephone numbers (home, business, mobile, etc.) associated with a specified individual named Bob. Such numbers are not associated with independent entities. In the example provided by Timmins, all of the telephone numbers that are retrieved are associated with a single individual named Bob, and are in fact stored together in a single contacts folder in association with one another. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims (2-5, 8-12), are patentable over the cited art. The dependent claims also contain patentable limitations.

Independent Claims 13 and 25

Independent claims 13 requires “generating a record which contains a plurality of telephone numbers resulting from the data search, the telephone numbers being associated with a plurality of entities.” Claims 13 further requires “establishing communications connecting the caller’s call to two or more of the telephone numbers in the record in accordance with a call

pattern before a termination of the caller's call." Claim 25 is a system claim having limitations similar to those of claim 13.

Nowhere does Timmins teach or suggest connecting the caller to two or more of the numbers in accordance with a call pattern, as required by claims 13 and 25. A call pattern is a predetermined order in which calls are made. In one example, a personal dialing queue containing listings of shoe stores is generated based on a user's request, and the queue is arranged in alphabetical order. The user is connected to the first shoe store on the list, then to the second store on the list, etc. (specification, page 10-13). Timmins, in contrast, discloses no more than connecting a caller to a listing chosen by the caller from among several listings in a contacts list. Accordingly, claim 13 and its dependent claims (14-24), and claim 25 and its dependent claims (26-35), are patentable over the cited art. The dependent claims also contain patentable limitations.

IV. New Claims

As discussed above in section II, the new claims 36-40 are derived from allowable claims and should therefore be allowable as well.

New claim 41 depends from claim 1 and further requires selecting automatically the first telephone number from the record, and establishing automatically the first communication. The cited art does not teach or suggest these limitations. Therefore, new claim 41 is patentable over the cited art.

New claim 42 depends from claim 1 and further requires selecting automatically the second telephone number from the record, and establishing automatically the second communication. The cited art does not teach or suggest these limitations. Therefore, new claim 42 is patentable over the cited art.

New independent claim 43 requires, among other limitations, selecting automatically the first telephone number from the record, establishing automatically the first communication, selecting automatically the second telephone number from the record, and establishing automatically the second communication. The cited art does not teach or suggest these limitations. Therefore, new claim 43 is patentable over the cited art.

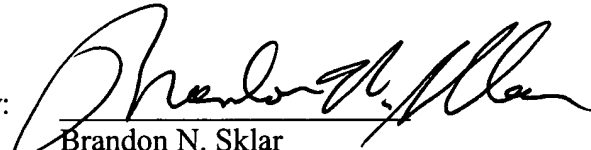
V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, each of claims 1-43 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of these claims is requested and allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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